

# Walk 11 WALSHAW TO AINSWORTH

Distance: **2 miles**

About: **2 to 3 hours**

Terrain: **Ascent 138ft descent 89ft**

Parking: **Plenty on street' available.**

Public transport:

**480 - Bury.**

**480 - Bolton via Greenmount, Hawkshaw & Affetside.**

**510 - Bolton via Ainsworth.**

**510 - Bury.**

Refreshments:

**The Queen Victoria and the White Horse, Walshaw.**

**Duke William and the Old White Horse, Ainsworth.**

No public toilets. All paths fully waymarked.

*The three Whitehead reservoirs were constructed for the nearby Lower Croft Works and are together with the surrounding areas are sites of biological importance (SBI) and an excellent area for wildlife. The bird sightings at this site cover many species, including the Common Tern, Wheatear, Oyster Catcher, Mallard, Canada Geese, Great Crested Grebe, Greylag, Moorhens, Coots, Black-headed Gull, Common Terns, Great Spotted Woodpecker, House Martins, Swallows, Willow Warblers, Nuthatch, Reed Buntings, plus Eyebright, Hairbell and other interesting plants and Chimney Sweeper Moths.*

Continue downhill at around the same angle, looking out for the narrow wooden bridge over the stream to the lower reservoir.

Cross the bridge and follow the path uphill. Just before the top turn right, over a stile, and enter a long straight stretch over a very pleasantly wooded hillside.

**Look out for Kestrel, Buzzard, Skylark, and Martins in the fields and Little Owls in the trees on either side.**

Eventually the path joins the road to Paddock Leach and Old Barn Farm.

Turn right and then left and straight ahead down the path, alongside the track to Paddock Leach.

*The original Paddock Leach dated back to the seventeenth century or even earlier, in 1900 it became an Isolation Hospital (for smallpox, TB or any other infectious disease) and when a purpose-built replacement was erected nearby at 'Broomfield', it became a TB Sanatorium. Paddock Leach was deemed by the Local Health Authority to be of no further use and to avoid the health risk from any residual highly infectious diseases, sadly ordered it to be destroyed by fire in December 1971. Paddock Leach stood there for well over 300 years and served the local children as the "haunted house" for almost as many years.*

➊ When the track turns sharply to the right, take the path to the left and go over the stile on the left into the meadow and follow the hedge around to the right.

Cross the next stile and note a few yards beyond the right turn to join the Village Link Walk No 13 to Hawkshaw.

Go down the path between the hedges to eventually emerge in front of a row of rather pretty cottages

*Knowsley Cottages reputedly, but unverified, are Flemish weavers' dwellings of the seventeenth century'.*

Go past the cottages to join Knowsley Road. The track on the opposite side of the junction goes to Barrack Fold Farm.

*In 1642 Lord Strange (a royalist and the 7th Earl of Derby) mustered several thousand men on Cockey Moor in preparation for the attack on Bolton. The assembly on Cockey Moor was probably in the neighbourhood of Barrack Fold Farm, which could well be how the farm received its name. There is also a local tradition that a number of soldiers lay buried by a clump of trees near the footpath leading down to the bridge over Whitehead's reservoirs. Another suggestion is that Knowsley, which is the name of the Stanleys in Lancashire, received its name because Lord Strange's soldiers mustered there or that Lord Strange himself had his headquarters about there.*

*The Holcombe Hunt point-to-point races were held here from 1921 to 1971, known as the 'Mill Workers Derby' attracting crowds of thousands. The mills of Bury and Bolton closed for the day and crowds of up to 100,000 are reported as attending the early meetings.*

Turn left down Knowsley Road past George's Wood on the right

*This wood was planted in 1974 by the "Men of the Trees" and is now maintained for the community by the Woodland Trust.*

Continue down the road into the village past modern houses and turn first right past Hooks Cottage, with a date-stone 1773 above the door which indicates that it was built by Nathan Brooks (buried in the graveyard opposite)

On the left the handsome Unitarian Chapel and the Reform Club on the right with the original horse mounting steps and block still in place outside it.

*Both buildings are Grade-II listed, both built in the 18th century. The chapel was first built in 1715, and enlarged in 1773. In the graveyard are many interesting 18 & 19th century graves. The Reform Club (now the Old Stables) was built in 1768 to provide accommodation and stabling for worshippers who lived miles away from the village.*

Turn left around the back of the Chapel following the cobbled yard to the left and through the covered

archway, attached to The Duke William Pub.

*The Duke William Inn dates back to 1737. Reputably haunted, it was one of the two coaching inns on the old main road through the village which then crossed Arthur Lane. It was probably at the crossroads where the local gibbet was sited and where hangings took place.*

Go down Duke Road opposite the pub, to emerge on to Church Street in the centre of Ainsworth almost opposite the lych gates of the Parish Church, (just inside the gate are a pair of slotted stones thought to be the remains of the village stocks dater 1724).

*Ainsworth has a long history of human habitation, Bronze Age burial sites and artefacts, dating back at least six thousand years, have been found on the surrounding moors. It was first mentioned in the early 13th century, when land there was given by Roger de Middleton to Cocksand Abbey. Later the village was part of the estates of the Earls of Wilton at Heaton Park. Religion has played a large part in its history. The Church of England had a chapel of ease built in Tudor times but subsequently there was a long history of religious dissent.*

*The area was initially dispersed farms with a medieval hall at Dearden farm and extensive ridge and furrow crop marks delineating a medieval field system north of Barrack Fold. Much of the surrounding area was common land but was gradually enclosed. Coal mining was extensive on Cockey Moor from the earliest times with evidence of early bell pits visible from Cockey Moor Road. The whole township was finally enclosed in the early nineteenth century. In 1853 the vicar recorded that 1700 people lived in Ainsworth, mostly handloom weavers and small farmers.*

Public transport:

**486 - Radcliffe to Bury via Ainsworth.**

**510 - Bury to Bolton via Ainsworth & Walshaw.**

Car parking plentiful.

Refreshments:

**Old White Horse & The Duke William, Ainsworth.**



Jay

➊ Starting from the War Monument in the centre of Walshaw, walk up the High Street passing Christ Church on the left.

Take the fifth opening on the right into Slaidburn Drive and proceed straight ahead, ignoring the entrance to the estate on the left, go down the farm track towards 'Meadow Croft.'

Follow the stone boundary wall along the track. At the end of the wall, go left down the footpath to the 'kissing' gate.

➋ Go through the gate and head downhill at around 45 degrees to pass just left of the middle Whitehead reservoir (a nice spot for a picnic on a sunny day)

# WALK 11 - WALSHAW TO AINSWORTH

## Walks

Walk No.11 - Walshaw to Ainsworth

Walk No.12 - Ainsworth to Walshaw

